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Government of Canada Takes Important Steps to Advance Canada's Northern Strategy

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Gatineau, Qc (May 14, 2008) - The Honourable Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources, and the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today announced significant new investments in research projects that will further advance the Government of Canada vision and strategy for the North.

The ministers announced a new $25-million investment that includes $20 million for seabed mapping and related work to support Canada's submission on the outer limits of its continental shelf and an additional $5.2 million for projects associated with International Polar Year (IPY).

"These are major financial commitments that will bring new research and information about our Arctic, which in turn will lead to new economic and social opportunities for northerners and all Canadians," said the Honourable Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources. "They are about turning potential into prosperity."

"Our government is following through on the Prime Minister's commitment to create a strong and prosperous North," said Minister Strahl. "Our clear and bold vision, set out in our integrated Northern Strategy, is the most forward-thinking and results-oriented approach for the North since the early 1960s."

Budget 2008 provided $20 million over two years for data collection and legal work for the development of Canada's submission to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf for the purpose of establishing the limits of the extended continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles. This funding allocation has been doubled to almost $40 million over four years to ensure Canada's best efforts in presenting an effective submission in support of its case.

"This investment highlights the government's commitment to securing international recognition of Canada's sovereign rights in the North," said the Honourable Loyola Hearn, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. "Completing seabed mapping in the Arctic and Atlantic oceans will enable us to deliver a strong submission to withstand any future challenges from neighbouring countries."

Canada has until 2013 to submit proof of the outer limits of its continental shelf to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Three federal departments, Natural Resources, Fisheries and Oceans, and Foreign Affairs and International Trade, are working together to present Canada's case to satisfy these requirements.

"Completing the mapping of Canada's extended continental shelf and making our submission to the UN will reaffirm Canada's ability to explore and exploit its natural resources over 1.75 million square kilometres of its extended continental shelf — an area about the size of the Prairie provinces," said the Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The ministers also announced $5.2 million to support projects related to IPY communications and training. The projects will help explain IPY research to Canadians, increase awareness of issues involving Canada's Arctic and build capacity to conduct northern research.

The ministers made the announcement at an event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Polar Continental Shelf Project, which has built an international reputation for its work to support researchers working in the extreme climactic conditions of the Far North. The Polar Shelf plays a very significant role in the provision of land-based field research on behalf of Canada's northern science community.

IPY is the largest-ever international program of scientific research focused on the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Canada is a global leader in this important international initiative, with the largest new investment of funds for polar research and training of the participating countries.

More information on the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf .

For more information on IPY .

Backgrounder: IPY Communications and Outreach Projects

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Backgrounder - International Polar Year Initial List of Communications and Training Projects

The Government of Canada has allocated $5.2 million to fund communications and training and outreach projects, as part of its International Polar Year program. After a national call for proposals and rigorous review process, a diverse range of applicants from across Canada – including community organizations, educational groups, government departments and agencies – has been chosen to carry out creative and innovative projects that will become part of Canada's IPY program.

These projects will help raise awareness about the Canadian Arctic and its peoples, promote IPY and polar science and research, and foster greater understanding of the importance of the polar regions among Canadians and other countries. Specific activities will encourage youth, particularly in the North, to learn about polar science and research. Others will provide experience and training for Northerners to carry out northern-based research and monitoring during and after IPY.

Below are some of the projects that have been selected for funding. Other selected projects will be announced pending further approvals.

Communications Projects

Making northern science accessible: Popularizing northern scholarly articles
Arctic Institute of North America

This project will rewrite technical articles in academic journals about northern science and IPY research, and make the information more accessible to the general public, and Northerners in particular. They will then distribute these articles to the media and other outlets.

2008 Alianait! Arts Festival – Premiere performance of Oatiaroi (Wait)
Iqaluit Music Society and *Alianait Arts Festival*

Nunavut's Artcirq will perform Oatiaroi (Wait), a 60-minute theatre production portraying global warming and its impact on the Arctic from an Inuit perspective. The performance incorporates theatre, circus arts and traditional Inuit storytelling.

Arctic Seabirds as Insiders on Climate Change
Meltwater Media

Seabirds have become harbingers of environmental change in the Arctic. This film will document the work by IPY researchers to study these important Arctic birds, as well as the insights of Inuit seabird hunters.

Formation of Labrador: Two Windows on the Planet
Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

Formation of Labrador: Two Windows on the Planet is a project to create a book for children aged 9 to 12, telling the fascinating story of the creation of the polar regions through the world of geology and traditional folklore, with an emphasis on Labrador.

Arctic Odyssey – Journey to the Top of the World
Science North

Science North is creating *Arctic Odyssey – Journey to the Top of the World*, an IMAX film that will feature the impacts of climate change on the Arctic. It will also show how Canadians are carrying out world-class science during IPY. It is a celebration of the North as it exists today, reminding us all of the importance of Canada's polar regions.

Gwich'in Settlement Regional Atlas: Mapping a Path through Change
Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board

Gwich'in Settlement Regional Atlas: Mapping a Path through Change will be a regional atlas, a hardcover book that will include important geographic information about the Gwich'in region. It will feature maps, photos, easy to understand scientific information and traditional knowledge.

Polar Perspectives: Canadian IPY Speaker Series and Youth Forums
Canadian Museum of Nature

This is a national speaker series to be hosted at museums across Canada, featuring a wide variety of dynamic speakers on important issues and intriguing topics involving Canada's Arctic. Scientific research being funded by International Polar Year will also be highlighted and explained.

Aquatic Ecology of the Canadian Arctic
Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Aquatic Ecology of the Canadian Arctic will be a comprehensive book, with an accompanying website, that describes the fascinating and important field of Arctic freshwater and marine ecosystems, including the species that inhabit them and the research methods used to study them.

Long Ago Person Found (Kwaday Dan Ts'inchi) Symposium and Publication
Kwaday Dan Ts'inchi Management Committee / Royal BC Museum

This project will highlight the results of the discovery of ancient human remains at the edge of a melting glacier in British Columbia's Tatshenshini-Alsek Park. The general public and scientific communities will hear the results of nine years of research, partly funded by IPY, involving experts at eight universities and cultural institutions in Canada and five other countries.

Arctic Shadows: The Arctic Journeys of RM Anderson
Grayhound Information Services

This documentary film will capture the early 19th century Arctic journeys of Dr. R.M. Anderson, a former chief biologist with the National Museum of Canada and a world renowned expert on mammals of the North. Long overshadowed by his dramatic colleague Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Dr. Anderson's story is another exciting glimpse into Arctic history.

Dempster Highway Natural History Event Series
Friends of Dempster Country Society

The Friends of Dempster Country Society in the Yukon will host six events along the Dempster Highway, Canada's northernmost highway. Each event will focus on a different aspect of the area's natural history, connecting this to current IPY scientific research and environmental concerns.

Training Projects

Students on Ice – IPY Arctic Youth Expeditions 2008-2010
Students on Ice Foundation

IPY is funding 10 students per year for three years to take part in the highly successful Students on Ice program.

The program provides youth aged 14 to 17 with a greater understanding and appreciation for the Arctic, while inspiring them to continue their studies of the polar regions.

Yukon College Field Course to North Slope
Renewable Resources Management Program, Yukon College

This is a 14-day field course for Yukon College students to visit an IPY research project investigating the impacts of climate change on birds and mammals on the Yukon North Slope. The students will help collect data for this project.

Cowley Lake Studies
Yukon Department of Education

This project involves a field study program for high school students in the Yukon. It will engage students in a scientific monitoring project on Cowley Lake near Whitehorse.

Northern Village Data Collection System
Nunavik Research Centre, Makivik Corp.

The Northern Village Data Collection System will bring together representatives from 15 communities in Nunavik for training on a web-based data collection system. This will allow users to record their plant and animal species-related observations and improve data management in the region.

Organization of the Nunavik Research Centre
Nunavik Research Centre, Makivik Corp

The Nunavik Research Centre holds a wealth of important research materials related to the Nunavik region; however, work is needed to organize the collection so it can be used more effectively. This project will involve training staff and organizing the research centre's resources.

Contrasts between the Poles
Geological Survey of Canada

This project will involve two northern students traveling to the Antarctic to participate in the collection of ice cores. They will be working with world-renowned glaciologist Roy Koerner, learning about ice coring, ice thickness measurement and sampling for contaminant studies. They will also be involved in the analysis of the data collected.

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